

# CULTURAL HISTORY

Governor Dodge State Park is located in the “driftless” region of Wisconsin, so named because the succession of continental glaciers – over the course of thousands of years – did not move through this area. This left the region with a characteristically rugged terrain, deep valleys and high bluffs.



■ **PALEOINDIAN PERIOD (ca. 10,000 to 8000 BC)** — As glaciers receded, migratory



New York State Museum, Albany

groups of people settled throughout the area’s woodlands and grasslands, hunting native herding animals such as bison and mastodon, and exploiting small game, fish and plant resources as well. The people moved with the seasons, harvesting game and plants as they became available. Tool kits of the time included spear-like projectile points (Clovis, Folsom and Plano types), flake knives, simple choppers, and large scrapers. The settlement pattern of these people is not well known, since relatively few such sites have been identified and professionally excavated. **No Paleoindian sites have been identified within Governor Dodge State Park, although they are likely here.**

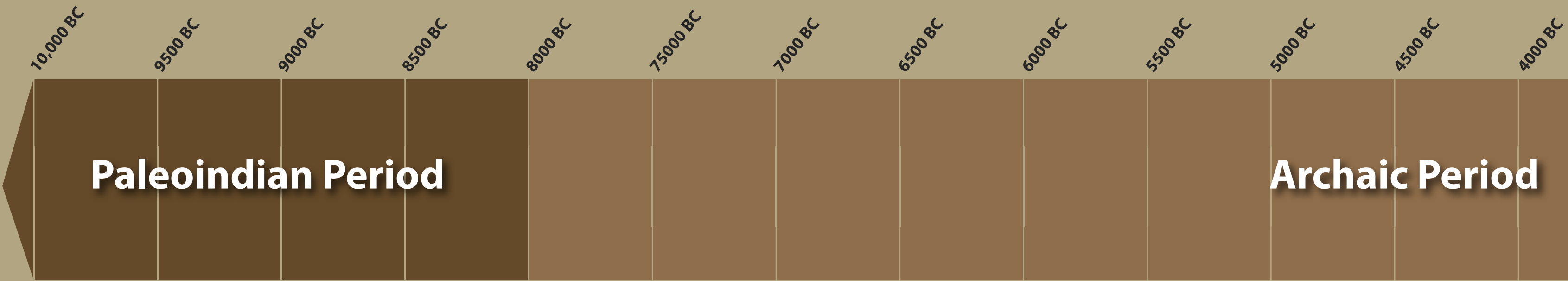
■ **ARCHAIC PERIOD (ca. 8000 to 500 BC)** — While continuing to rely on large game hunt-



American Museum of Natural History Library

(adapted from the George Catlin painting *Indians Hunting Buffalo, Sioux*)

ing, people of this period used increasingly diversified technologies associated with hunting, trapping, fishing, foraging, wood-working and plant processing. Chipped stone tools such as stemmed and notched projectile points dominated their tool kit, but the use of pecked and ground stone implements (e.g., axes) also became widespread. The use of copper is apparent in the late Archaic Period. Habitation sites tended to be located along the margins of wetlands and rivers. **Evidence of occupation by Archaic peoples has been found in Governor Dodge State Park.**





# Governor Dodge State Park

## WOODLAND PERIOD (ca. 500 BC to historic contact)



Illinois State Museum

is associated with this period, although intensive gathering provided the bulk of subsistence needs. Settlement patterns resembled earlier periods. Significant technological innovations of the Woodland peoples were the development of pottery, and later, the bow and arrow. Earthwork (mound) construction, frequently associated with burials, and including animal-shaped or “effigy” mounds, also developed during this period. Because of the dense concentration of effigy mounds in the state, Wisconsin is considered the center of what is referred to as “effigy mound culture.” **Although no mounds have been identified here, a Woodland period habitation site has been found in Governor Dodge State Park.**

## ONEOTA (ca. 1000 to historic contact)



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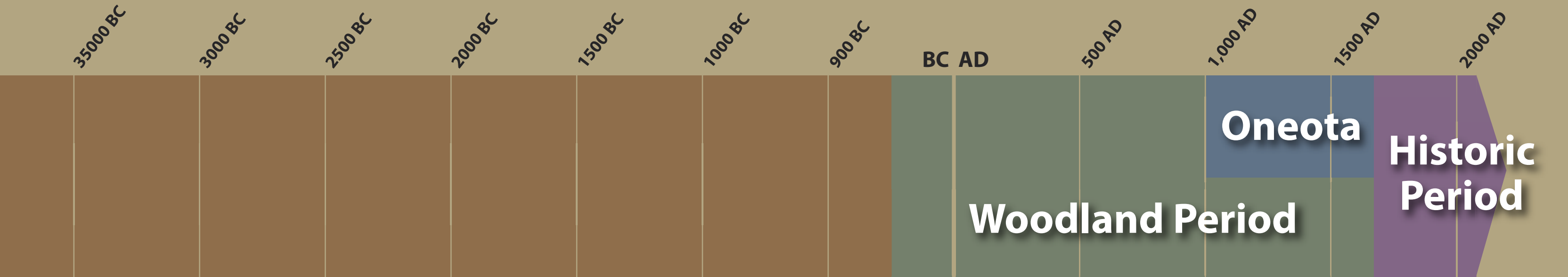
Evidence of Oneota occupation is reported for areas of Wisconsin, with the largest identified sites along the margins of major river valleys or tributaries. These people developed a blended subsistence strategy based on simple agriculture (including corn, beans, and squash), gathering and hunting, and participated in extensive trade networks. The Oneota were some of Wisconsin’s first farmers. **No Oneota sites have been identified within Governor Dodge State Park.**

## HISTORIC PERIOD (ca. 1650 to present)

Early in this period, the region was occupied by Native Americans, most of whom had descended from earlier occupants. French fur traders moved into the region by the late 1600s, to be succeeded by English and American traders. EuroAmerican settlement of the area accelerated in the early 1800s, with First Nations such as the Ho-Chunk displaced from ancestral lands. The area saw a rapid expansion of mining and agriculture during the mid to late 1800s, and many historic-era sites presently dot the landscape. **A number of historic properties and structures (e.g., the Spring House shown at right) are located within Governor Dodge State Park.**



Michael Dampf, WDNR





# DEER COVE ROCKSHELTER

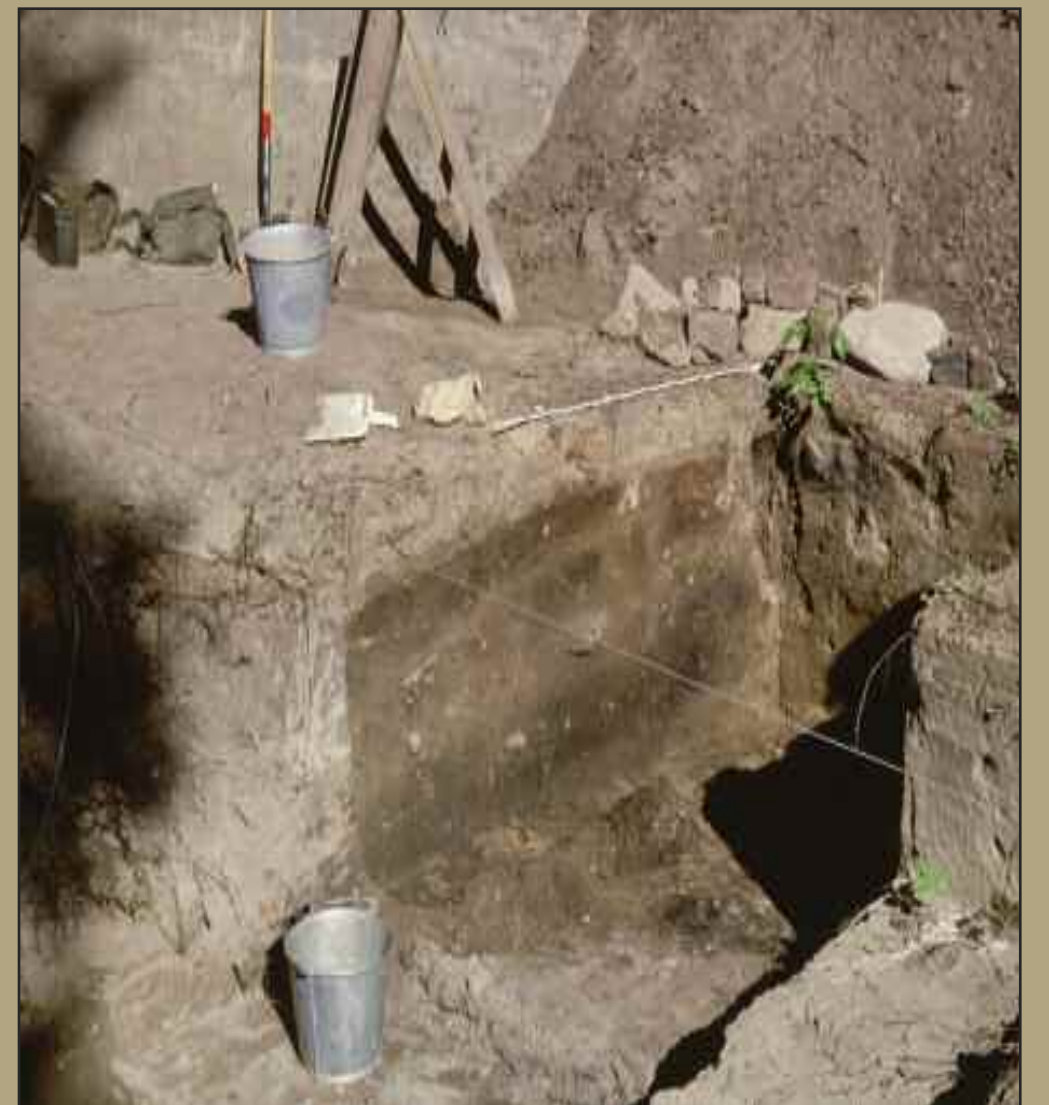
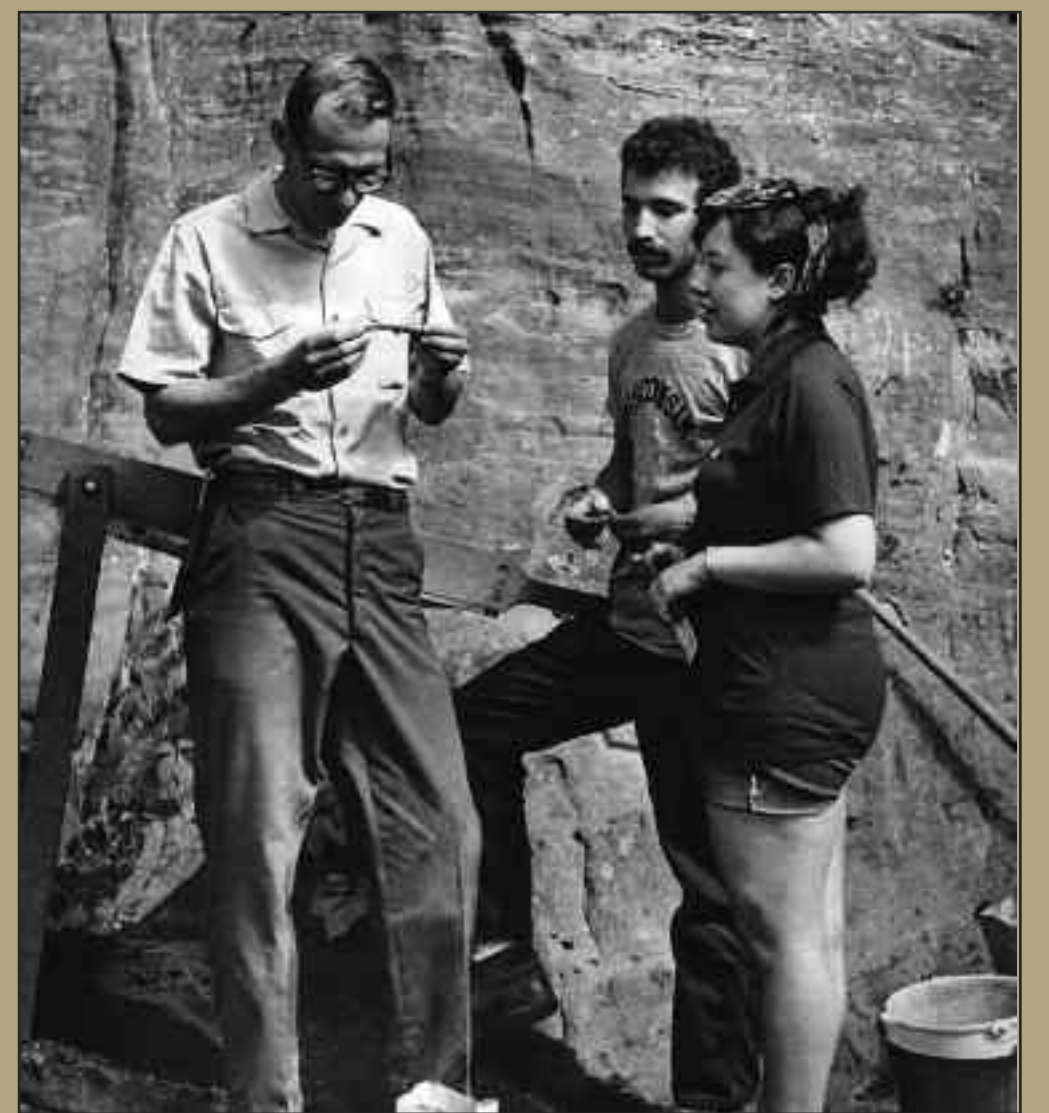


Governor Dodge State Park encompasses a two-mile east-west valley at the head of Mill Creek, which flows east and then northward into the Wisconsin River. Though the valley bottom is relatively flat, the walls are steep. An area underneath a dolomite limestone rock overhang has long been known locally as “deer cove” because deer were frequently observed sheltering there.

Rockshelters such as Deer Cove Rockshelter were used as habitation sites by early people. These sites are selected for archaeological investigation because they provide geological conditions favorable to stratified deposits. Deer Cove Rockshelter was excavated twice: in 1958 by Warren Wittry, and again in 1968 by James Stoltman. Artifacts discovered in excavated layers confirmed that Deer Cove Rockshelter was occupied by both Archaic and Woodland period peoples.

## Excavations at Deer Cove Rockshelter

*Photos courtesy of Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin*



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Kiosk donated by Friends of Governor Dodge State Park



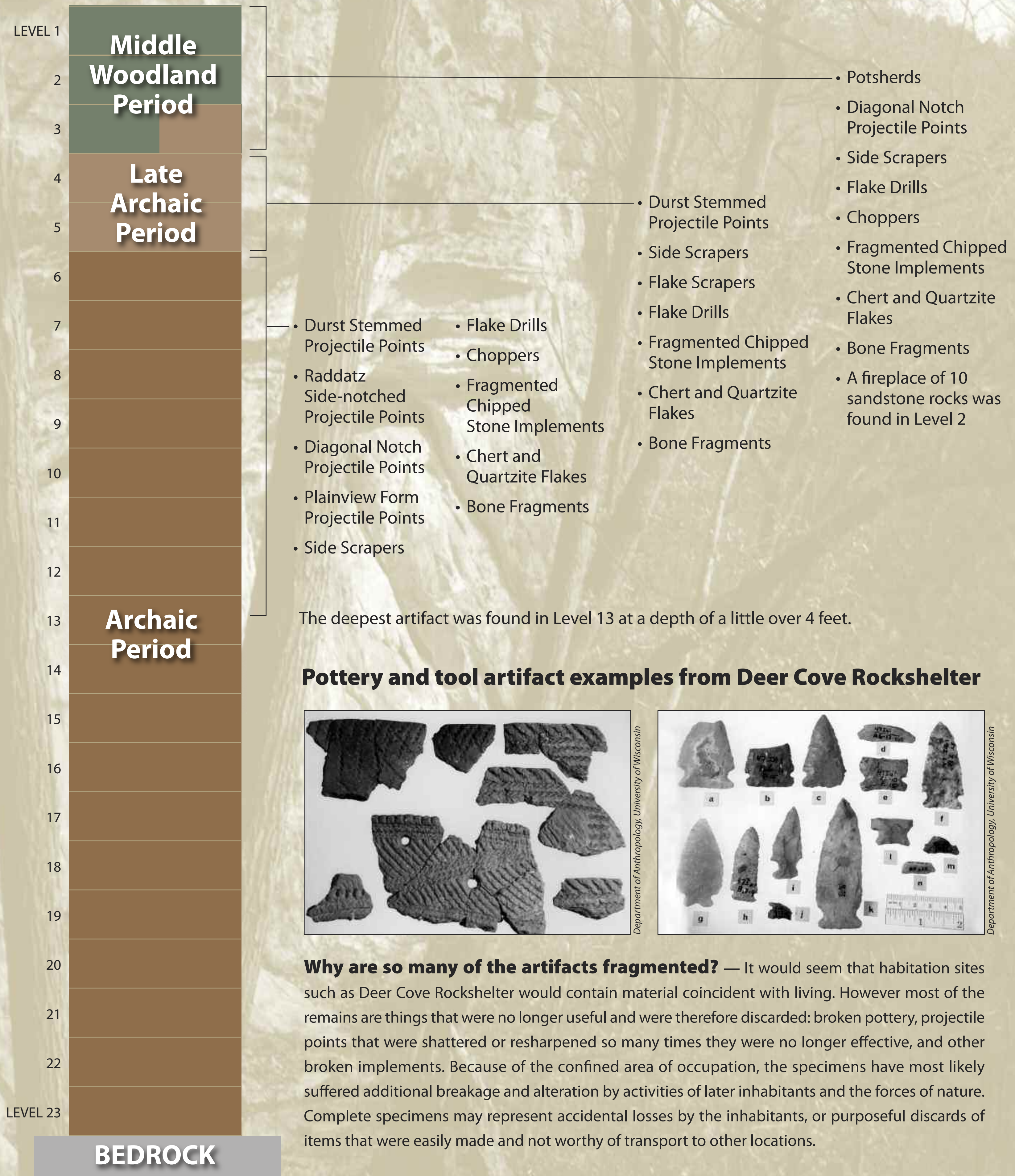
# Archaeological Investigations

# DEER COVE ROCKSHELTER – Excavation Findings

## EXCAVATED LAYERS

(each layer = 4 inches)

## TYPES OF ARTIFACTS DISCOVERED



**Numerous other prehistoric Native American sites (including camp sites, rockshelters, and rock art sites) occur within Governor Dodge State Park, but the period of occupation for many of these sites is not presently known.**

**NOTE: Collecting archaeological materials or otherwise disturbing archaeological sites or historic structures on state lands is prohibited under provisions of Wisconsin state law.**